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Uncovering Gen Z's Styles: A Deep Dive into the Consumer Behavior in the Fashion Industry

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Abstract

As the first digital generation, Gen Z individuals exhibit unique characteristics and preferences that challenge traditional marketing strategies It appears that Gen Z has very different shopping habits from previous generations. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a thorough investigation into various aspects of Gen Z's relationship with fashion, including their shopping habits, brand preferences, influences, sustainability concerns, and how they express themselves through clothing and style choices. The study focuses only on Generation Z individuals aged 12 to 27 who actively shop for fashion items in the fashion industry and who are living around Noveleta, Cavite. The study covers three years to capture information about recent trends and changes. Due to time limitations, the study restricted data collection to interviews, excluding other methods. It will limit the investigation to specific fashion product categories, such as clothing and footwear. This study used qualitative research given that it aims to investigate how Gen Z consumers engage in the fashion industry. In this research, the researchers conduct a thematic analysis to interpret the collected data. The results of the study are, Gen Z expressed their individuality through different fashion style by creating unique outfits based on what they prefer. Social media is the most common factors influencing Gen Z's decisions to purchase fashion products. Gen Z expressed a strong preference for sustainable and ethically produced fashion products that align with their values and beliefs. Lastly, affordability constraints are the most common experiences and challenges faced by Gen Z consumers.

Introduction

The emergence of Generation Z in the world is one of the reason why luxury fashion industry has witnessed a significance shift in the preferences and behavior of a consumer while buying a fashion items. As the first digital generation, Gen Z individuals exhibit unique characteristics and preferences that challenge traditional marketing strategies. Understanding their distinct styles is challenging for luxury brands aiming to stay relevant and thrive in these evolving preferences.

The appearance of digital platforms and social media has changed how Gen Z engages with fashion, offering them unparalleled access to trends, influencers, and brands from around the world. Consequently, their style choices are driven by a desire for authenticity, individuality, and social responsibility rather than mere brand prestige.

Recently, there have been many issues regarding consumer behavior in the fashion industry. In the study of Wang (2021) [34], it appears that Gen Z has very different shopping habits from previous generations. Gen Z's style is different from the previous generation that fashion brands struggle to understand their fashion preferences. They have a higher demand to show their uniqueness they are more willing to support the brands that support their opinions and beliefs. That's why some people thought that brands needed to be socially and environmentally responsible. So that, the fashion brands can satisfy Gen Z's wants and needs.

However, many different factors influence the decision-making of Gen Z consumers when selecting luxury fashion products. Gen Z tends to prioritize sustainability and ethically produced products. Some are drawn to brands that align with their culture, religion, and beliefs. At the same time, some members of Gen Z are highly connected online through social media. They often research and discover luxury brands through social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. In addition, some Gen Z are buying fashion product just to impress everyone. They think that they need to keep up with everyone who surround them. In the study of Ridwan (2022) [26] found that one of the factors influencing customer to buy a product is

the brands service. The better the company appreciates, serves, and facilitates customers, the more the consumer will always make the decision to make a purchase. Understanding these factors allows businesses to develop effective marketing to meet consumer preferences. Also, understanding these factors can enhance a luxury fashion brand's appeal to the Generation Z consumer.

This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a thorough investigation into the different styles and purchasing habits of Gen Z individuals about luxury fashion. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the factors, customer characteristics, roles, and style preferences that influence Gen Z's decisions and to uncover the underlying motivations and drivers behind Gen Z's engagement with luxury fashion by knowing their evolving tastes, values, and aspirations, to inform strategic decision-making, and fostering innovation within the luxury fashion sector, ensuring its relevance and resonance amidst the ever-changing preferences of Gen Z consumers.

This study aims to explore the fashion preferences, trends, and behaviors of Generation Z individuals. It will delve into various aspects of Gen Z's relationship with fashion, including their shopping habits, brand preferences, influences (such as social media, family, celebrities, friends, or peers), sustainability concerns, and how they express themselves through clothing and style choices.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to provide valuable insights into the different factors that influence Gen Z's decisions and to uncover the underlying motivations and drivers behind Gen Z's engagement with fashion. Our research aims to explore the fashion preferences and behaviors of Generation Z individuals. It will delve into various aspects of Gen Z's relationship with fashion, including their shopping habits, brand preferences, perceptions, influences (such as social media, family, celebrities, friends or peers), sustainability and ethical concerns, factors affecting their purchasing decisions, drivers and barriers, and how they express themselves through clothing and fashion style choices.

Methods and Materials

This study used qualitative research given that it aims to investigate how Gen Z consumers engage in the fashion industry. Qualitative research is a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world phenomena (Tenny et al. 2022) [29]. Qualitative research can be used to gain a deep contextual understanding of the subjective social reality of individuals. This research design allows the researchers to delve into the attitudes, preferences, behaviors, and experiences of Gen Z consumers about fashion, providing information and a detailed perspective that might not be captured through quantitative methods. The researchers used a Case Study research design for this study. In the study of Priya et al. (2020) [27], case studies are a qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection methods. The case study will focus on gathering accurate, precise and reliable information about the behavior of Gen Z consumers within the fashion industry. As part of the research design, Gen Z consumers who are actively involved in the clothing and footwear industry will be selected. By using a case

study approach, the study will gather an in-depth analysis of the behavior of Gen Z consumers within the fashion industry, offering marketers and fashion brands a useful - useful information to develop new products that match the preferences of Gen Z customers. In this study, semi-structured interviews and primary data collection techniques were used. The semi-structured interviews with ten respondents from Gen Z provide deep insights into the preferences and behavior regarding the Fashion Industry. Through primary data collection methods, such as interviews, researchers aim to obtain firsthand information from Gen Z respondents. This method provides a deeper understanding of their experiences and views, providing deep insights into their preferences and behaviors.

A sample of ten (10) respondents from the population of Gen Z consumers in Noveleta, Cavite, who are engaged in purchasing clothing and footwear items were selected by the researchers. They have specific characteristics, such as age, location, engagement in the Fashion Industry, and purchasing habits. The samples are within the range of Generation Z only, who were born between 1997 and 2012 and are living around Noveleta, Cavite. Also, they have a record of purchasing fashion products, particularly clothing and footwear while other products such as accessories and bags are not covered. Through quota sampling, the study will be filled with proper information by selecting participant based on their characteristics.

The researchers conduct a thematic analysis to gain insights and discover what Generation Z's preferences and behaviors are in the fashion industry. The researchers will analyze the gathered information through thematic analysis. Previous study by Kevin (2024) found that thematic analysis consists of 5 steps, such as familiarization, coding/topic creation, analysis, definition, article name, and writing. Thematic analysis can be applied to the study to analyze and interpret the qualitative data collected from Gen Z consumers. Researchers can identify and analyze the themes that characterize the behavior of Gen Z respondents, by following the steps mentioned in the article. Therefore, these steps will help the researchers in their study. This can provide insight and a deeper understanding of the perceptions, and behavior of the individuals involved in the study which is the goal of the researchers. Through thematic analysis, potential differences, relationships, and patterns in the data can also be identified, which may lead to implications or recommendations for practical application or conducting other studies.

Results and Discussion
▪ **Perception of Identity**
Gen Z's perception of identity is crucial in expressing their unique style through clothing, as personal style is a highly individualized and subjective form of creative self-representation reflecting an individual's personality, mood, and lifestyle. Gen Z consumers appreciate fashion for personal fulfillment and well-being, while others find it fascinating to express themselves beyond words. Creativity is linked to imagination, originality, flexibility, and risk-taking, and Gen Z consumers like to create unique outfits based on their wants. Identity and heritage appreciation are crucial aspects of personal and cultural identity, fostering a stronger sense of self and cultural understanding. Gen Z appreciates cultural clothes, showing respect and understanding of others cultures. However, the fashion

industry faces criticism for cultural appropriation, which is seen as disrespectful and perpetuating harmful power dynamics. The study emphasizes the importance of accepting imperfection and trusting in abilities and decisions for personal growth and resilience. Fashion significantly impacts an individual's self-perception and self-worth, enhancing confidence, empowerment, and self-esteem. Gen Z individuals express their identity through fashion, respecting traditional clothing and promoting inclusivity and sustainability in the fashion industry. These findings not only inform the fashion industry about the evolving preferences of Gen Z consumers but also provide valuable insights into how the industry can adapt and transform to meet the needs of Gen Z consumers. By embracing creativity, valuing culture, building confidence, and maintaining identity, the fashion industry and Gen Z consumers can both benefit.

▪ **Factors Influencing Preferences**
Gen Z's clothing preferences are influenced by various factors, including latest trends, favorite brands, environmental concerns, family, and cultural values. Passion for fashion items is evident in Miaca and Rosa, who both appreciate the importance of fashion in giving identity, courage, and expression. Gen Z enjoys experimenting with different styles and trends, blending traditional and modern clothing. Modern classic preferences combine modern and classic design elements with a preppy aesthetic, while aesthetic fashion prioritizes artistic expression and visual appeal. Presentability is crucial in the fashion industry, as it showcases one's beauty and handsomeness. Trend awareness is crucial for businesses and individuals to adapt and stay competitive. Social media, trends, and celebrities also influence Gen Z's fashion choices. Personal values align with Gen Z's fashion choices, emphasizing the importance of understanding money's significance before making decisions. Brand preferences, such as brand image, reputation, quality, style, and values, help consumers find other brands, leading to satisfaction and loyalty. Consumer motivation plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior and influencing purchase decisions. Consumers increasingly support brands that prioritize ethical practices and eco-friendly clothing, contributing to a healthier environment and reducing waste. Gen Z's fashion preferences are influenced by their parents fashion style and heritage, and the fashion industry must adapt to these changing preferences. Popular culture, including celebrities and social media platforms, influences fashion trends and consumer behavior. Ethical and sustainable brands, committed to moral and social responsibility, focus on fair trade, environmentally friendly manufacturing, and philanthropic efforts. Consumers are increasingly conscious about their purchases, and ethical brands are more preferable. Quality in fashion items is determined by materials, craftsmanship, functionality, and overall appeal. Jhon and Samit emphasize the importance of checking the quality of clothes before making a purchase. The fashion industry plays a role in meeting consumers fashion styles and solving problems they face, ensuring customers have a satisfying experience. By prioritizing ethical and sustainable factors in purchasing decisions, brands can gain more customers and contribute to the growth of the fashion industry. Understanding what influences Gen Z's choices, such as trends, brand loyalty, environmental concerns, family influence, and cultural values, helps fashion

businesses create products that are aligned and attractive to this generation.

▪ **Drivers/Barriers Influencing Attitudes**
Gen Z's purchasing decisions are influenced by factors like social media influence, brand trust, and environmental concerns, while barriers like financial constraints and seller comfort can hinder their purchasing decisions. Selective Shopping Behavior involves consumers being involved in the purchase process and considering brand differences to ensure the best value for money. Affordability constraints are common challenges faced by Gen Z consumers when purchasing fashion items, such as low budgets and personal financial circumstances. To overcome these constraints, it is crucial to focus on saving money and adopting strategies to overcome financial constraints. Sustainability and ethical factors can also influence consumer purchasing decisions. To promote a more sustainable and responsible industry, brands should be transparent about their practices, develop affordable, sustainable options, and provide clear information. The seller-customer relationship is crucial for gaining customer loyalty and repeat purchases. Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping Gen Z's fashion preferences, and credibility is essential for loyal customers. Consumers seek reviews and ratings before purchasing products, and a recent study found that providing proof of online reviews influences purchase intention in consumer behavior. This finding can help fashion industry tailor their strategies to meet and provide consumers needs and wants.

▪ **Manifestations of Consumers Attitudes**
Gen Z's attitudes manifest in their shopping habits, including being picky, following trends, choosing ethical brands, and making decisions, influencing their thoughts and values as fashion consumers. Gen Z consumers purchasing decisions are influenced by trust, ethical considerations, and personal preferences. Gen Z consumers value positive feedback, social media trends, and sustainable ethical fashion. They are influenced by psychological and intellectual approaches, making their purchasing decisions influenced by factors such as brand values, cultural expression, social responsibility, and peer influence. Financial circumstances also play a significant role in Gen Z's fashion choices. Strategic management is crucial for the fashion industry to differentiate itself and build loyalty. Understanding customer needs is essential for effective marketing strategies. Prioritizing transparency and accountability in supply chains can build trust among consumers concerned about the social and environmental impact of fashion. Jeremiah and Mark advocate for sustainable fashion, aiming to design, create, and market socially and environmentally responsible products. Addressing issues in the fashion industry can attract more consumers, build long-term relationships, trust, and loyalty. Offering unique offers can help manage customer expectations and create unique experiences. The fashion industry's future vision focuses on social conscience, diversity, and sustainability, promoting creativity, innovation, and fair labor standards. These findings can help fashion industry to be more aware on what Generation Z or other consumer wants and needs and to attract more customers to buy in their fashion products.

Conclusion
This study has looked into how Gen Z behavior affect the Fashion Industry. By investigating their different styles and purchasing habits, the researchers discover these findings;

Gen Z's unique style and personal identity are reflected in their clothing choices. They appreciate fashion for personal fulfillment and well-being, valuing creativity and cultural understanding. Fashion impacts self-perception, self-worth, confidence, empowerment, and self-esteem. By embracing creativity, valuing culture, building confidence, and maintaining identity, the fashion industry and Gen Z can benefit from this shift. They are influenced by various factors, including trends, favorite brands, environmental concerns, family, celebrities, social media and cultural values. They appreciate the importance of fashion in giving identity, courage, and self-expression. Personal values, brand preferences, and consumer motivation also play a role in shaping purchase decisions. Ethical and sustainable brands, committed to moral and social responsibility, are increasingly preferred. Quality in fashion items is determined by materials, craftsmanship, functionality, and appeal. By understanding these influences, brands can create products that are attractive and aligned with Gen Z's preferences. Gen Z's purchasing decisions are influenced by social media, brand trust, and environmental concerns, while financial constraints, self-confidence deficiency, and seller comfort can hinder them. Affordability constraints can be overcome by focusing on saving money and adopting sustainable practices. The seller-customer relationship is crucial for loyalty and repeat purchases. Social media influencers and online reviews can help tailor fashion industry strategies. Gen Z's shopping habits are influenced by trust, ethical considerations, personal preferences, and financial circumstances. They value positive feedback, social media trends, and sustainable ethical fashion. The fashion industry must prioritize transparency, accountability, and sustainable fashion to build loyalty and attract more customers. Offering unique offers and focusing on social conscience, diversity, and sustainability can help the industry meet Generation Z's needs and attract more customers. The fashion industry is undergoing a significant transformation due to sustainability, personalized offerings, and digital transformation. Consumers demand environmentally-friendly production methods, requiring brands to adopt advanced technologies and invest in omnichannel experiences, virtual try-ons, and hyper-personalization.

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